

**FFYs 2021-25 Transportation Improvement Program:  
Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period**

5/28/2020

Project/Issue	Name	Support/ Oppose/ Request/ Concern	Comment	Response
<b>Regional Transportation Advisory Council (RTAC)</b>				
Funding Targets	Organization: Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Support	Expresses appreciation for the MPO's commitment to meeting funding targets by project category as set forth in the Long Range Transportation Plan, and especially the significant investments made toward Complete Streets projects in recent TIP cycles.  Supports the inclusion of funds for five projects in the Community Connections program in FFY 2021, as well as funding for the program in future years.	The MPO appreciates RTAC's support in distributing its funding to transportation projects in the region in accordance with the goals set in the Long-Range Transportation Plan, Destination 2040. The MPO intends to continue to strive to achieve a similar funding balance in coming TIP cycles and looks forward to allocating the two percent of funding dedicated to Community Connections projects in FFY 2022 and beyond.
Project Evaluations	Organization: Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Support	Expresses appreciation for the continued time and effort of the MPO to measure and address equity in project scoring, project selection, and overall evaluation of the TIP.	MPO staff continue to seek ways to highlight the role of transportation equity in making investment decisions in the Boston Region and intend to advance this work in Chapter 6 of the TIP and in other venues like the ongoing revisions to the TIP project selection criteria. The MPO appreciates RTAC's recognition of this critical work.
Project Selection	Organization: Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Support	Supports the decision to program the highest scoring projects, in their respective funding categories, in the FFY 2025 TIP element, given the limited funding available.  Supports the decision to not fund the McGrath Boulevard project in FFY 2025. Expresses support for programming the project in the FFYs 2022-26 TIP.	The TIP project selection criteria are the primary decision-making tool leveraged by the MPO to allocate limited transportation dollars to projects throughout the Boston region. The MPO appreciates RTAC's support for the centrality of this process in the broader development of the TIP.  The McGrath Boulevard Project (#607981) remains a high priority for near-term funding by the MPO as signified by the project's programming in the MPO's 2025-29 time band in Destination 2040. RTAC rightly acknowledges the limited funding available to the MPO to program new Major Infrastructure projects in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP cycle. This project will be reconsidered by the MPO for funding in the FFYs 2022-26 TIP and the MPO appreciates RTAC's support for programming such a regionally significant project.
Project Costs	Organization: Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Concern	Expresses concern about the extent of cost increases for previously programmed TIP projects, noting that 31 of 47 projects saw cost increases. If this trend continues, future TIPs may not be able to meet original expectations, requiring additional projects to be reprogrammed in later years. In turn, these delays could lead to increased costs.  Recommends that the MPO or MassDOT provide incentives to encourage better cost estimates during preliminary design of projects.  Recommends that MPO staff conduct preliminary scoring of projects prior to reaching 25 percent design, in order to provide project proponents with a sense of how the project will be ultimately scored against other projects. Programming decisions would be made later in the design process, when cost estimates are more developed. Asks if financial assistance with design would be possible for high-scoring projects.  Recommends that the MPO continue to study how to measure the cost effectiveness of projects, stating that this would further help the MPO and municipalities judge which projects are most likely to be programmed and worth moving through the entire design phase.  Recommends value engineering for larger projects, such as was performed on the Green Line Extension.  Requests information on how MassDOT assesses initial cost estimates.	The MPO acknowledges the significant role project cost increases played in limiting the funding available for new projects in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP. MPO staff intend to engage the board in further dialogue on this subject during the summer of 2020, at which point some of the suggestions provided by RTAC may be discussed in greater detail. Cost-control incentives, penalties for cost increases, preliminary project scoring, cost-effectiveness evaluations, and value-engineering requirements are all worthy recommendations. MPO staff look forward to raising this topic with the MPO in the coming months and exploring whether these solutions and others may offer a remedy to the issue of project cost increases during future TIP cycles. It should also be noted that impacts from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on project costs and timelines are currently unknown, but MPO staff will continue to monitor this issue in the coming months.

**FFYs 2021-25 Transportation Improvement Program:  
Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period**

5/28/2020

Regionally Focused and Advocacy Organizations			
Project Selection in the 495/MetroWest Region	Organization: 495/MetroWest Partnership	Support	<p>Supports inclusion of 21 projects in the 495/MetroWest area. Expresses particular support for the Rehabilitation of Route 16 (Milford); Holliston Street and Cassidy Lane Safe Routes to Schools Improvements (Medway); Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (Phase 2D) (Sudbury); Mass Central Rail Trail (Sudbury and Wayland); and increased funding for the MWRTA.</p> <p>Expresses support for six projects in the TIP Universe, noting the organization's long standing support for Route 27 over Route 9 Bridge Replacement and Interchange Improvements (Natick) and the Intersection Improvements at Route 126 and Route 135/MBTA and CSX Railroad (Framingham).</p> <p>Expresses concern that four projects in the region were moved to later TIP elements, with particular disappointment regarding the Construction of I-495/Route 1A Ramps (Wrentham) moving from FFY 2023 to FFY 2024. Notes the the project would address a 495/MetroWest Partnership-identified "transportation nightmare."</p> <p>Expresses concern that four projects in the 495/MetroWest Region were removed from the TIP, with particular disappointment regarding the Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon Installation at Route 9 and Maynard Road (Framingham). Since 2010, 41 pedestrians have been struck by vehicles on Route 9 in the MetroWest region. Stretches of Route 9 remain unsuitable for pedestrian use, and gaps between crosswalks frequently exceed one mile. The project, located in the vicinity of Framingham State University, would provide improved access to Framingham Center.</p>
Project Costs	Organization: LivableStreets Alliance	Request	<p>Citing 31 projects which saw cost increases in the FFYs 2020-24 TIP, requests that the MPO create clear accountability metrics and increase public oversight to prevent significant and unexpected adjustments in funding.</p> <p>Requests that the MPO program projects after they reach 75% design status. There is a great deal of uncertainty at the 25% design phase. Cost estimates for projects at 75% design will be significantly more accurate, preventing the cost increases faced by the FFYs 2020-24 TIP.</p> <p>Noting that this will require more upfront costs for project proponents without the assurance of funding, recommends that MassDOT develop a process to financially support the design process. This process should provide additional opportunities for transparency and accountability.</p>
Transit Modernization Program	Organization: LivableStreets Alliance	Request	<p>Supports inclusion of the Transit Modernization Program in the FFY 2025 TIP element.</p> <p>Requests clarification on how this money will be spent in order to program the correct amount, and requests that the MPO allow public input on how the funding is used.</p>
Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue (Boston)	Organization: LivableStreets Alliance	Request	<p>Requests adjusting the project scope for the Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue to allow for bus rapid transit and a reduction in traffic lanes for private vehicles. This adjustment would allow for a single seat side between Everett and Downtown Boston, reduce crowding on the Orange Line, and encourage mode shift.</p> <p>Supports comments provided by ITDP on the Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue.</p>
TIP Document and TIP Interactive Database	Organization: LivableStreets Alliance	Request	<p>Requests clarity in the TIP document and TIP Interactive Database regarding which projects are funding by the MPO and which are funded by MassDOT. Recommends grouping regional target projects and MassDOT projects into separate tables in the TIP document, and requests that regional target projects and MassDOT projects receive distinct color coding schemes.</p> <p>Requests an additional column in the TIP tables showing differences from the previous TIP document, including newly programmed projects, cost changes to previously programmed projects, and explanations of cost changes.</p>

**FFYs 2021-25 Transportation Improvement Program:  
Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period**

5/28/2020

Projects in the City of Somerville	Organization: Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee	Support	<p>Supports the inclusion of three projects in the City of Somerville in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP: the Green Line Extension and the Community Path Extension in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP; Davis Square Signal Improvements; and Signal and Intersection Improvement on I-93 at Mystic Avenue and McGrath Highway.</p> <p>Supports funding any modifications to the final design of the Green Line Extension necessary to improve bicycle access and parking at stations, improving safety issues, and providing safe connections to other regional multi-use paths including the Grand Junction Path and Mystic River Path.</p> <p>Requests accelerating the design process and funding for the McGrath Boulevard Project. The project will improve safety for multiple modes of transportation, as well as provide better neighborhood connections.</p>	<p>The MPO thanks you and the Somerville Bicycle Advisory Committee for your support for projects that offer important transportation alternatives to communities throughout the region. The MPO also recognizes your specific support for several projects that promote a healthier, safer, more sustainable, and more connected Somerville, including the Green Line Extension (#1570), Davis Square Signal Improvements (#S10785), Intersection Improvements at Mystic Avenue and McGrath Boulevard (#608562), and the forthcoming McGrath Boulevard Project (#607981). The support for these projects by the City of Somerville and advisory groups like SBAC is highly valued by the MPO and the board looks forward to continuing to support these critical projects as they move toward construction in the coming years.</p>
Greenhouse Gas Reductions	Newton resident: Lucia Dolan	Concern	<p>Expresses concern that the amount of CO2 reduced through the TIP is not a significant amount when compared to annual CO2 emissions in the Commonwealth.</p>	<p>The MPO appreciates your questions on the scale of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions that are projected to result from the investments included in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP. A reduction in emissions of 11.7 million kilograms of carbon dioxide is expected to result solely from the investments made through the MPO's Regional Target funding program, which represents roughly 12% of total funding allocated over the five years of the plan. This number does not include the remaining federally funded investments in the TIP made by the MPO's partners at MassDOT, the MBTA, CATA, and MWRTA, which are anticipated to result in significant additional reductions in GHG emissions. Some of these emissions are quantifiable, while others are qualitative reductions based on marginal anticipated performance improvements of a facility, and all of this information is available in Appendix B of the TIP if you would like to review project-by-project details on emissions reductions. It should be noted that GHG information for transit projects is not currently included in Appendix B, but will be added as soon as the MPO receives this information from our transit partners.</p> <p>Additionally, several Regional Target projects are not included in the cited 11.7 million kilogram figure. Projects that were modeled through the MPO's 2019 long-range planning process, including the Green Line Extension (#1570), Bridge Replacement on New Boston Street in Woburn (#604996), and the Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue in Boston (#606226), are anticipated to reduce GHG emissions by enhancing non-SOV alternatives including transit, walking, and biking. Furthermore, the FFYs 2021-25 TIP also includes funding for the MPO's Transit Modernization Program beginning in FFY 2025. While projects have not been selected for this program yet, in general, modern transit assets may help reduce emissions by encouraging non-SOV travel or by changing the amount or type of energy these assets use. Projects funded through the MPO's Community Connections Program may also support emissions reductions by enhancing options for, and thereby encouraging, transit, bicycle, or pedestrian travel. Projects for the Community Connections Program have only been selected in FFY 2021, but it is anticipated that further funding awarded to projects in FFYs 2022-2025 will contribute to additional GHG emissions reductions in the region.</p> <p>In short, the MPO anticipates total carbon dioxide emissions reductions of significantly greater than 11.7 million kilograms per year when the above investments are included. It should also be noted that 30,400,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide represents the emissions from the transportation sector across the entire Commonwealth, while the emissions reductions captured in the plan only include the investments being made within the Boston region. Reducing emissions in the region is one of the MPO's chief policy goals and the board will continue to seek to fund projects that make a positive impact on this front in TIP cycles to come through the continued funding of non-auto transportation alternatives.</p>
Concord Avenue Transit Signal Priority	Organization: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy	Support	<p>Supports inclusion of the Concord Avenue Transit Signal Priority project in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP stating the proposed low-cost improvements could be a catalyst for larger nearby projects which can include more BRT elements.</p>	<p>The MPO shares your enthusiasm for the Concord Avenue TSP project in Cambridge and is hopeful this project can become a model for other similar projects funded through the MPO's Community Connections Program in the years to come.</p>
Bridge Replacement, North Washington Street over the Boston Inner Harbor (Boston)	Organization: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy	Support	<p>Supports inclusion of the North Washington Street Bridge project in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP, which will include an inbound bus lane as part of the project.</p> <p>Recommends that an evaluation of traffic and congestion take place during construction, when there will be a single outbound lane, to see if one outbound lane is sufficient for vehicular traffic. A single outbound lane would allow the conversion of the second outbound lane to a bus lane. Notes that the corridor serves five bus routes and as many as 30 buses per hour.</p>	<p>The MPO appreciates your comments on several projects where accommodations for bus priority should be considered, including the North Washington Street Bridge in Boston. MPO staff will share your feedback on these projects with the project proponents so that the designers are aware of your concerns.</p>
Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street (Watertown)	Organization: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy	Concern	<p>Expresses concern that the Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street will increase congestion without the ability to transit vehicles to bypass congestion. Notes that the corridor was part of the 2018 Mount Auburn Street joint pilot between Cambridge and Watertown which featured queue jump lanes for buses at two intersections in Watertown and resulted in highly positive responses from riders. Opportunity exists to improve the level of priority for buses as part of the project which would likely be well received by the community.</p>	<p>The MPO appreciates your comments on several projects where accommodations for bus priority should be considered, including the Mount Auburn Street corridor in Watertown. MPO staff will share your feedback on these projects with the project proponents so that the designers are aware of your concerns.</p>
Reconstruction of Ferry Street (Everett)	Organization: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy	Request	<p>Requests that the design of the Reconstruction of Ferry Street not preclude the corridor from serving as an alternate route for vehicle traffic should Broadway in Everett be redesigned as a TSP corridor.</p>	<p>The MPO appreciates your comments on several projects where accommodations for bus priority should be considered, including the Ferry Street project in Everett. MPO staff will share your feedback on these projects with the project proponents so that the designers are aware of your concerns.</p>

**FFYs 2021-25 Transportation Improvement Program:  
Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period**

5/28/2020

<p>Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue (Boston)</p>	<p>Organization: Institute for Transportation and Development Policy</p>	<p>Request</p>	<p>Requests that design for the Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue incorporate BRT. Recent ITDP analysis of the corridor indicated that southbound traffic could be accommodated by two travel lanes, while northbound traffic could be accommodated by one travel lane. However, the current project design retains six lanes for nearly the entire length of the project. The corridor could allow for direct bus service from Everett, Malden, Medford, and Somerville to Downtown Boston, reducing crowding on the rapid transit system and reducing overall trip times. The Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue, along with the North Washington Street Bridge project, could provide a continuous bus lane from Everett and Sullivan Square to Haymarket Square.</p> <p>Requests that the current design, which retains underpasses at Sullivan Square and Austin Street, be restudied, as previous plans showed the feasibility of an all at-grade plan. This would create a less highway-like environment, slowing traffic, creating a safer roadway, and reducing emissions.</p>	<p>Enhancing multimodal transportation options is one of the MPO's chief policy goals in the region, and this certainly applies to projects that receive a significant amount of MPO funding like the Reconstruction of Rutherford Avenue in Boston (606226). The City of Boston will continue to iterate on this project's design as it moves towards construction, and the MPO encourages ITDP and all other stakeholders to participate in key conversations on this project such as the 25% design public hearing, which should take place in the coming months. The MPO appreciates the work of ITDP in conducting independent analyses of this corridor and looks forward to helping to facilitate a continued dialogue about how this project can be designed to best meet the current and future transportation needs of the City of Boston and the region more broadly. Of note, MassDOT and the MBTA are also examining bus routes through Sullivan Square as a part of the Silver Line Extension study, which may result in recommendations to alter bus facilities in the vicinity of this project area.</p>
<p>Environmental Justice</p>	<p>Organization: Conservation Law Foundation</p>	<p>Concern</p>	<p>Expresses concern that an insufficient amount of major infrastructure projects funded by the MPO are serving environmental justice populations comprised of low-income residents, residents of color, and LEP populations. As shown in the TIP document, implementation of regional target projects will perpetuate inequities in air pollution and transportation investment. Non-minority populations will benefit from a 25 percent greater air pollution reduction than minority populations, and people fluent in English will benefit from a 65 percent greater reduction than those with limited English proficiency. States that these figures should disqualify this program from implementation, adding that binding measures should be implemented to ensure that the TIP does not knowingly perpetuate or exacerbate inequities on transportation equity populations.</p>	<p>The MPO appreciates your support for increased investments in transportation projects that benefit Environmental Justice communities and shares your goal of reducing historical disparities in transportation impacts such as the emission of carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and volatile organic compounds. The MPO acknowledges that reductions in transportation-related emissions from Regional Target investments are lower for people of color, those with limited-English proficiency, and those with disabilities than they are for nonminorities, those fluent in English, and those without disabilities in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP. However, when MPO-funded investments are considered more broadly beyond just emissions reductions, the MPO is funding projects at a higher rate in transportation equity areas than in non-equity areas for all demographic groups except for those with disabilities, where investments fall 0.5% short of this share of the population.</p> <p>While these emissions-related investment disparities exist in this TIP, the MPO is taking steps to alleviate this problem through its ongoing effort to revise the TIP project selection criteria. Through this effort, MPO staff have proposed more heavily weighting scores toward projects that reduce emissions in Environmental Justice areas. The MPO anticipates utilizing these new scoring criteria in the next TIP cycle as one component of its effort to continue to promote transportation equity through its investments in infrastructure in the Boston region.</p>
<p>Clean Air and Sustainable Communities</p>	<p>Organization: Conservation Law Foundation</p>	<p>Request</p>	<p>Requests that monitoring and performance standards for any non-GHG pollutants be done on a local scale rather than a regional scale. The impact of non-GHG pollutants is local, affecting the people and communities where the higher levels of pollutants are located. Emissions reductions viewed only at a regional scale does not ensure that those emissions reductions are distributed equitably.</p>	<p>The MPO recognizes the need to improve air quality not just regionwide, but also in the specific geographies within the region that have higher current levels of pollution. As a part of the effort to revise the TIP project selection criteria discussed above, MPO staff have proposed that projects be scored more highly if they reduce emissions in parts of the region that have above-average levels of PM2.5 pollution. This change is anticipated to help direct more Regional Target funds to areas that most urgently need improvements in air quality. Additionally, the MPO acknowledges that deadlines to meet SIP commitments have not been met in the past, but continues to support this important work through its ongoing commitment of \$190,000,000 to the Green Line Extension, the final year of which is in federal fiscal year 2021 in this TIP.</p>
<p>Funding for Transit Projects</p>	<p>Organization: Conservation Law Foundation</p>	<p>Request</p>	<p>Requests additional funding to support the Green Line Extension to Route 16 in Medford. This funding would provide essential public transportation services to a densely populated and underserved part of the region. The project will reduce GHG emissions, as well as provide more equitable access to transit to five state-defined environmental justice communities.</p> <p>Requests that the Red-Blue Connector receive TIP funding, to the extent that the project is not fully funded in the CIP. The project will add capacity to the system, advance social equity, and provide access to key job centers and destinations. In addition, the Red-Blue Connector would advance the goals of the MPO, particularly Clean Air and Sustainable Communities, Transportation Equity, and Economic Vitality.</p>	<p>The MPO shares CLF's goal of creating a more robust transit system that will support an increasingly sustainable, healthy, equitable, and vibrant Boston region. Projects such as the Green Line Extension to Route 16 in Medford and the Red-Blue Connector remain on the MPO's radar for future consideration for funding, however these projects must first be initiated by the MBTA before the MPO can elect to allocate funds to them. Of note, funding to further evaluate the Red-Blue Connector is included in the 2021 Massachusetts Capital Investment Plan under the MBTA's Expansion Project Development program.</p> <p>In the interim, the MPO has recognized the urgency of further investment in the region's transit system, leading to the creation of its new Transit Modernization Program in 2019. The first year of funding for this program appears in FFY 2025 of the FFYs 2021-25 TIP and sets aside \$5,500,000 in Regional Target funds to be allocated to transit projects. Similar amounts of funding will continue to be allocated to this program in FFY 2026 and beyond, creating a dedicated year-over-year funding stream for the MPO to flex Regional Target highway funds to transit projects. This represents a commitment by the MPO to fund projects like station accessibility enhancements or the procurement of transit vehicles with the aim of increasing ridership on the region's transit system. MPO staff will continue to work with the MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA to build out this program to best meet the needs of transit riders in the region.</p>
<p>Transit Vehicle Procurement</p>	<p>Organization: Conservation Law Foundation</p>	<p>Request</p>	<p>Supports the replacement of current diesel fleet vehicles, as outlined in the TIP document.</p> <p>Requests any new vehicles be electric or zero-emission vehicles. Electrifying buses reduces the climate impact of public transit and eliminates air pollution from these vehicles along their fixed routes, thus protecting the health of the drivers, riders, and people who live along the routes. Replacing diesel buses and vans with hybrid vehicles is a positive change, but these vehicles could potentially be in service for decades before being replaced with zero-emission vehicles.</p>	<p>The MPO recognizes the need for near-term action to significantly reduce vehicle emissions in the transportation sector, which includes the replacement of existing diesel buses with lower-emission technologies. The MBTA is currently piloting battery-electric buses on the Silver Line and the MPO will continue to monitor the results of this effort. The Regional Transit Authorities (MBTA, MWRTA, and CATA) are responsible for maintaining their fleets and prioritize investments in vehicles through their transit asset management plans, which dictate the rate at which existing fleets are replaced with lower-emission vehicles. Where possible, the MPO may be able to support future electric bus purchases through its Transit Modernization Program, though, as mentioned above, this program is still being developed.</p>

**FFYs 2021-25 Transportation Improvement Program:  
Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period**

5/28/2020

Climate Resilience	Organization: Conservation Law Foundation	Request	Requests climate resilience become a standalone prerequisite to any future infrastructure capital investment project. Ensuring that infrastructure is climate resilient advances many of MPO's goal areas in addition to system preservation, including safety and economic vitality. In addition, these measures would reduce flooding and reduce failure in extreme weather events.	The MPO shares CLF's goal of promoting greater climate resilience through infrastructure investments in the region. As a part of the criteria revision effort noted above, MPO staff are working to increase the extent to which resilience is taken into consideration as a part of the project selection process. These more robust resiliency criteria are anticipated to be used in the next TIP cycle.
MBTA Project Selection	Organization: MBTA Rider Oversight Committee	Support	Supports programmed funding amount for the Signals and Systems Program in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP, particularly for the Infrastructure and Asset Management Program for the MBTA.	The MPO appreciates your support of the significant investments being made through the MBTA's signals and systems program. The prioritization of reliability and modernization projects is central to the investment strategy for federal funds in the region, and these projects aim to deliver significant benefits to transit riders through increased system performance and reduced delays.
Community Connections Program	Organization: MBTA Rider Oversight Committee	Support	Supports the projects selected for funding in FFY 2021 as part of the Community Connections Program.  Expresses concern that the Newton Microtransit and Sharon Carpool Marketing projects may be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.	The MPO shares your enthusiasm for the pilot round of the Community Connections Program and understands your concerns about how COVID-19 may impact the operations of some of these projects. MPO staff will continue to monitor this situation and will work with project proponents to address challenges to project delivery that may result from the ongoing pandemic.
Performance-Based Planning and Programming	Organization: MBTA Rider Oversight Committee	Support	Supports the ongoing development and implementation of Performance-Based Planning and Programming, as described in Chapter 4 of the TIP document. Express appreciation regarding the detail in the evaluation process, as well as the difficulty in deriving metrics for economic vitality.  Notes the importance of before and after assessments for all projects that lend themselves to such analyses, stating that improving decision making depends on the ability to assess the effectiveness of previously programmed projects.	The MPO recognizes your appreciation of its Performance-Based Planning and Programming efforts and is committed to furthering this work. MPO staff will soon begin a TIP before-and-after study to measure the impacts of past project investments and staff are working to update the Performance Dashboard to better share progress on key metrics with the public.
Public Engagement	Organization: MBTA Rider Oversight Committee	Support	Supports efforts to engage the public and to get a wide array of input into the TIP development process. Expresses appreciation of MPO staff for the readability of dense material.	Public engagement is a priority of the MPO, and MPO staff will continue to invest resources in public engagement to make the regional transportation planning process as accessible as possible to all stakeholders. The MPO thanks you for recognizing these efforts to date and welcomes further feedback on how to improve its public engagement practice going forward.

**FFYs 2021-25 Transportation Improvement Program:  
Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period**

5/28/2020

Programmed Projects			
Bridge Replacement, Route 62 (Maple Street) over Ipswich River (Middleton)	Municipal: Katrina O'Leary, Middleton Town Planner  Middleton resident: Andrew Sheehan	Support	Supports inclusion of the Maple Street over Ipswich River bridge replacement project in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP. The pedestrian bridge is an important component in completing the Middleton Rail Trail, which will ultimately connect to the Danvers Rail Trail. In addition, the project will replace a deteriorating bridge which is currently hazardous for motorists and the Ipswich River.  The MPO values your support of project #608522, the bridge replacement on Route 62 over the Ipswich River in Middleton. The MPO recognizes the need for the project as the deteriorating condition of the bridge poses hazards to both bridge users and the surrounding environment. The MPO looks forward to continuing to support the project and is hopeful it will advance towards its 2024 advertisement date without further delays.
Independence Greenway Extension and Multi-Use Path Construction of Independence Greenway at I-95 and Route 1 (Peabody)	Organizations: The Solomon Foundation; Essex National Heritage Commission  Peabody resident: Walter Booth  Topsfield resident: David Read  Concord, NH resident: Robert Spiegelman	Support	Supports inclusion of the Independence Greenway Extension and the Multi-Use Path Construction of Independence Greenway in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP. The projects are critical in the region's trail network, providing connections to the Boston to Border Trail, the East Coast Greenway, and the Danvers Rail Trail. The proposed bridge over Route 1 will provide a significant, safe connection in the region's trail network, linking communities from Salisbury to Boston.  The MPO appreciates your support for both the extension of the Independence Greenway (project #609211) and the connection between the Independence Greenway and other existing trails (project #610544). Together, these projects will significantly enhance the existing rail trails in Peabody and the surrounding communities, serving to expand the off-street bicycle and pedestrian network for the entire region. The MPO recognizes the important benefits these projects will bring for the safety, economic vitality, and connectivity of the region and values your support for them as they move forward toward construction in the coming years.
Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (Phase 2D) (Sudbury)	Municipal: Henry L. Hayes, Jr., Sudbury Town Manager	Support	Supports inclusion of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (Phase 2D) in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP, stating the project is of regional and statewide importance, particularly during the ongoing pandemic. The project has broad voter support, as well as the Board of Selectmen and staff of the Town of Sudbury.  The MPO thanks the Town of Sudbury for supporting Phase 2D of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (608164). As noted in your letter, this project will provide countless benefits for the entire region, including increased bicycle and pedestrian safety, improved alternative transportation options, and enhanced connectivity between Sudbury and its surrounding communities on the broader Bruce Freeman trail network. The ongoing robust support for this project by the Town of Sudbury is highly valued by the MPO and the board looks forward to continuing to support the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail as Phase 2D moves toward construction in the coming years.
Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street (Watertown)	Municipal: Matthew Shuman, Watertown Town Engineer	Support	Supports inclusion of the Rehabilitation of Mount Auburn Street in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP. The current roadway design features a number of safety issues, including a MassDOT-identified High Crash Location, and many of the existing pedestrian facilities have low visibility and fail to meet current ADA standards. There are no bicycle accommodations in the corridor. The proposed improvements include the addition of bicycle lanes where feasible, widened sidewalks, and curb extensions. In addition, the project will incorporate TSP or bus queue lanes, where appropriate.  The MPO values your support of project #607777, the Reconstruction of Mt. Auburn Street in Watertown. The MPO recognizes the important safety, connectivity, accessibility, and mobility improvements the project will provide, making this critical corridor function better for all users. The MPO appreciates the Town's commitment to moving the project forward on schedule and looks forward to continuing to support the project as it advances towards construction in the coming years.
Projects in the City of Woburn	Legislative: Representative Richard M. Haggerty, Representative Michelle L. Ciccolo	Support	Supports inclusion of three projects in the City of Woburn in the FFYs 2021-25 TIP: New Boston Street over MBTA Bridge Replacement, Intersection Reconstruction at Route 3 (Cambridge Road) and Bedford Road and South Bedford Street, and Roadway and Intersection Improvements at Woburn Common.  The New Boston Street Bridge Replacement is anticipated to have economic benefits similar to prior investments in the region, with landowners along New Boston Street planning for future development. Currently, all roadway users must travel nearly three miles to access the Anderson Regional Transportation Center or Route 93. The proposed project will significantly reduce that distance and reroute traffic off of congested roadways in Woburn, Reading, and Wilmington.  A 2014 Road Safety Audit identified the intersection of Route 3 and Bedford Street and South Bedford Street as a high crash location, and recent economic expansion in Burlington has worsened its functionality. The proposed improvements will create safer traffic lanes and more cohesive pedestrian access.  The MPO thanks the state delegation for supporting the many projects programmed for funding in the City of Woburn. As you note, these projects will provide countless benefits not just for Woburn, but for the entire region. From the increased connectivity and support for economic development provided by the New Boston Street Bridge (604996) to the important safety benefits of the intersection reconstructions at Route 3 and Bedford Road (608067) and Woburn Common (610662), these projects will collectively help make Woburn and the surrounding communities safer, more livable, and more vibrant. The ongoing support for these projects by the City of Woburn and the state delegation is highly valued by the MPO and the board looks forward to continuing to work with you on these projects as they move toward construction in the coming years.

**FFYs 2021-25 Transportation Improvement Program:  
Public Comments Received During the Public Comment Period**

5/28/2020

Additional Comments				
Community Path, Belmont Component of the Mass Central Rail Trail	Belmont residents: Cosmo Caterino, Frank French, Jessica Whited, Annie Xie, Cindy Taylor, Jen (no surname given), Margaret Watters, Maria Leza, Darin Takemoto, Paul Cobuzzi	Oppose	Opposes the design of the Belmont Component of the Mass Central Rail Trail, and oppose potential programming in future TIP documents. The proposed design runs along the north side of the commuter rail tracks, abutting homes and requiring easements. An alternate route along the south side of the commuter rail tracks would abut Belmont High School, facilitating student travel, and be built on land owned by the MBTA and the Town of Belmont. Additional issues raised by residents include safety concerns, with regard to the path's proximity to the commuter rail tracks; damage to private property, including mature trees; drainage concerns due to increased impervious surface; loss of privacy for abutters; decreased property values; decreased quality of life due to noise and light; high project costs; and increased crime.	The Belmont Community Path project has not been included in this year's plan. The MPO scored the project earlier this year as a part of our annual project evaluation process, but elected not to fund the project because it scored lower than other bicycle and pedestrian projects that were considered. At this time, the project remains unfunded.  The MPO understands that the Town of Belmont intends to submit revised project designs to our partners at MassDOT later this year. In light of the public comments received on the project, the MPO will consider the extent to which this design mitigates the concerns expressed about the project, including, among other issues: cost; impacts on abutters of additional lighting, noise, and traffic; environmental concerns such as the removal of trees, exacerbation of stormwater drainage issues, and possible soil contamination issues; and the safety implications of the path for bicyclists and pedestrians. The MPO also expects all transportation projects it funds to engage in a cooperative planning process involving all stakeholders, which in this case certainly includes the immediate abutters to the project like yourself. All of these aspects of the project will be taken into account before any future decisions are made to advance the project using MPO funds.
Community Path, Belmont Component of the Mass Central Rail Trail	Belmont resident: Jarrod Goentzel	Support	Expresses support for the Belmont Component of the Mass Central Rail Trail.	The MPO appreciates your support of the Belmont Community Path (609204) and recognizes the key connection this project is proposed to provide in the region's bicycle and pedestrian network. This project was scored earlier this year as a part of the MPO's annual project evaluation process, but the MPO elected not to fund the project because it scored lower than other bicycle and pedestrian projects that were considered. At this time, the project remains unfunded, though it may be reconsidered for funding in future TIP cycles.
Electrification of the Commuter Rail	Cambridge resident: Arthur Strang	Concern	Expresses concern that the FFYs 2021-25 TIP does not provide funds for electrification of the Commuter Rail.	The FFYs 2021-25 TIP does not include investments that directly implement the electrified commuter rail system outlined in the MBTA's Rail Vision process. Our partners at MassDOT and the MBTA are continuing to lay the groundwork for this vision to become a reality, including making necessary organizational changes to support this work. However, the ongoing pandemic has introduced a high level of uncertainty into the timeline and funding for Rail Vision. We recognize the urgent need to modernize the commuter rail system and it is the MPO's intention to support MassDOT and the MBTA in implementing this vision when clearer next steps are defined.
TIP Planning Process regarding COVID-19	Cambridge resident: Arthur Strang	Other	Asks if the FFYs 2021-25 TIP is relevant to the new public environment required by COVID-19, and if the TIP considers social distancing.	The MPO has been closely monitoring the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and is well aware that this event may directly impact the future landscape for transportation planning in the region. The draft FFYs 2021-25 TIP doesn't directly incorporate these impacts, as this situation is quickly evolving, but the MPO expects to consider these effects on the region's transportation system in the coming months as the consequences of COVID-19 become clearer.